



AOT in Action

Welcome to AOT in Action, your weekly e-newsletter from the Arizona Office of Tourism (AOT).

A Message from Director Sherry Henry:

Good morning,

Get the most out of your social media efforts!

From Twitter and Facebook to Youtube and Flickr, there are so many ways to use social media, but are you as strategic with your online marketing efforts as you can be? If you're looking for some insight on how to take a more tactical approach to your social media activities, check out the new Arizona Tourism University workshop series we are currently offering.

Our workshops will feature renowned social media expert and blogger Jay Baer who will be presenting on the importance of incorporating social media into your marketing efforts as well as how to be strategic about it. These social media opportunities are efforts that AOT has fully embraced and incorporated into our marketing activities. We hope that you are looking at these options too! More information can be found in the **AOT News** section below!

Have a great week.

AOT News

Arizona Office of Tourism Announces ATU Social Media Workshops!

The Arizona Office of Tourism is proud to present the next series of highly-informative Arizona Tourism University workshops. This complimentary workshop series, titled **First Why, Then How: Creating a Social Media Strategic Roadmap**, will begin in March.

The series will be presented by Jay Baer, one of the world's most popular social media consultants and bloggers. He is the creator of the *7-step Social Media Strategic Planning Process* and the *Twitter 20* series of live Twitter interviews. An online marketing pioneer, he has worked with more than 700 companies - and 25 of the Fortune 1000 - since 1994.

Be sure to sign up today by sending your RSVP to ATURSVP@azot.gov.

First Why, Then How: Creating a Social Media Strategic Roadmap complimentary workshops will be held from 1:00 to 3:30 p.m. in the following locations:

March 10

[City of Flagstaff Aquaplex](#)

1702 N. Fourth St.
Flagstaff, AZ 86004

March 26

[Glendale Civic Center](#)

5750 West Glenn Drive
Glendale, AZ 85301

April 9

Webinar – presentation delivered right to your desktop!

To register, send your contact information to ATURSVP@azot.gov.

AOT Events

Southern California AAA Sales Mission

Kristin Swanson, AOT's Travel Industry Marketing Specialist, participated in a sales mission with various Arizona Convention and Visitor Bureaus (CVBs) targeting AAA offices in the Southern California region on February 8-12. The delegation consisted of the Chandler Office Tourism, the Hopi Tribe, Mesa CVB, Tempe CVB, and the Tucson CVB. The Arizona delegates visited each AAA office by splitting into three teams covering the entire region. In all, the delegation provided new Arizona information to more than 300 travel agents and auto travel representatives. For more information please contact Kristin Swanson at 602-364-3696 or via e-mail at kswanson@azot.gov.

Upcoming Events & Activities

[UK Trade Incentive Co-op Marketing Program](#)

Date: March – April

Location: UK

[UK Media and Trade Mission](#)

Dates: March 8 – 12

Location: London and Manchester

Arizona Road Show in Mexico

Date: March 15 – 19

Location: Mexico City and Guadalajara, Mexico

Industry News

Interactive Exhibit Celebrates Baseball History in Arizona

Ty Cobb once soothed his old spring training aches and pains at the Buckhorn Baths mineral spas in Mesa. Willie Mays was the first to hit a homer at Phoenix Municipal Stadium. And Mickey Mantle and Joe DiMaggio played one season of spring training baseball together in Arizona. These are just some of the moments that make up the rich history of Cactus League baseball in Arizona and a few of the tales waiting to be told in the upcoming exhibit, Play Ball: The Cactus League Experience.

Scheduled to open Feb. 26, 2010, the exhibit will move into newly-renovated museum space at the Arizona Museum for Youth. Arizona's original spa at Buckhorn Baths used for player conditioning in the 1950s and the popular Wii baseball game, will take center stage. There also will be touch-screen kiosks for added historical content and decades old photos, baseball art and interactive activities including "design your own pennant" and "make your own trading card."

Youth will enjoy the 3-D stadium puzzles available for hands-on interaction, while adults can take in more audio visual elements with historical film montages, including Cubs legendary broadcaster Harey Carey and footage of spring training from the early 1950s. Also new is an installation describing the story of how former Arizona Governor Rose Mofford saved baseball for the state. This display will educate visitors on a momentous move that made baseball history and changed the Cactus League forever.

All together, Play Ball! helps celebrate the long and colorful history of professional baseball in Arizona from the sports barnstorming days before statehood, researched to be as early as 1909, to the inauguration of the Cactus League in 1947 and up to present day.

For complete exhibition information visit, www.PlayBallExperience.com.

U.S. Hotels Eye New Brands As Supply Growth Slows

Top U.S. hotel companies are scouting out new brands to expand their reach abroad and keep their best customers from defecting to rivals as new rooms growth slow down. In recent months, Choice Hotels International Inc (CHH.N), Hyatt Hotels Corp (H.N) and Wyndham Worldwide Corp (WYN.N) have all expressed interest in acquiring a brand.

Buying a brand allows a company to offer more hotels at different prices and give frequent guests more options, keeping them away from competitors. It also helps a hotel company diversify into new market segments and regions without the cost of developing a chain from scratch. "You're trying to be everything to everyone," Stifel Nicolaus analyst Rod Petrik told Reuters.

Loyalty program members book a large number of rooms, according to companies that operate and manage hotels. For example, roughly half of Marriott International Inc's (MAR.N) room nights are purchased by loyalty program members. And about 25 percent of the domestic gross room revenue of Choice Hotels comes from frequent guests.

"When so much of your business is driven by loyalty programs, you want to have all those offerings available to your customers," Petrik said. Acquiring a brand might be a good way for hotels to seize market share as new room construction slows down, analysts said. Data firm Smith Travel Research projects supply will grow 1.8 percent this year and 1 percent in 2011. Last year, the number of new rooms grew 3.2 percent. (*Marketing and Tourism Trends e-Newsletter, Feb. 15*)

FEDS Say AMR/BA Deal will be Good for Consumers

The third time was the charm for American Airlines, British Airlines and Iberia, as the carriers received tentative approval from government regulators for their joint business venture over the weekend. Consumers, however, aren't likely to see any immediate benefit from closer ties among the airlines, as the Transportation Department's preliminary approval won't be finalized for at least 60 days and it will take several months for the carriers to coordinate their businesses. But with the department's ruling and American's recent success at keeping Japan Airlines in its Oneworld alliance, American has stabilized its international network, making it more competitive with its rivals: United Airlines' Star Alliance and Delta Air Lines' SkyTeam.

"If American hadn't gotten this, they would have been screwed," said Darryl Jenkins, an industry analyst, adding that the venture brings hundreds of millions in incremental revenue to American. "It would have been all over for them internationally." (*Star-Telegram.com/Business; Page B4, Wall Street Journal; Travel Advance, Feb. 16*)

New Screening of Foreign Visitors Worries Tourism Leaders

The federal government is about to impose another new security requirement on overseas visitors heading for this country-and, once again, the nation's tourism industry is worried about how it might affect business, though this time it supports the measure. The Electronic System for Travel Authorization, known as "ESTA," is an automated system designed to screen travelers coming from nations where the U.S. doesn't require a visa for entering the country. An application-which has to be completed via the Internet before the traveler can board a plane to the U.S.-helps the Department of Homeland Security determine ahead of time whether a traveler is eligible to enter the country and whether that person poses a security risk.

The system replaces e I-94W form, which used to be filled out by airline passengers while en route to the U.S. While the tourism industry has objected to many of the previous proposals and programs, terming them too cumbersome, the U.S. Travel Association is on board with this one-pretty much. Still, the trade group doesn't think the federal government has done enough to publicize ESTA, and fears that could cost the U.S. some tourism dollars. The U.S. Travel Association fears that, if 6% of travelers are turned back at the boarding gate once full enforcement begins March 20, it could cost the U.S. 1 million visitors and an estimated \$3.2 billion in business during the first 12 months. That, in turn, would result in a loss of about 32,000 jobs and \$488 million in tax revenue. (*www.Orlando Sentinel.com/Business; Travel Advance, Feb. 19*)

IATA Reports Growth in Premium Travel

International Air Transport Association global traffic data released this week registered in December the first monthly year-over-year increase in the number of premium passengers since May 2008. In December, 1.7% more passengers flew in first or business class than in the same month in 2009. "2009 was a year of very distinctive halves, with severe recession early in the year and post-recession upturn in the second half," IATA said, noting that the low point for premium travel came in May 2009, when high-yield traffic was down 25% over the same month in 2008.

Since that low, IATA said premium passenger numbers grew 11% through December, but even with its first positive year-over-year posting in the last month of 2009, the overall size of the premium market remained down 17% compared with "the size of the market in early 2008, IATA said." This implies that premium travel has lost six years of growth." (*www.BTNOnline.com*, 2/16; *Travel Advance*, Feb. 19)

Calendar of Events

Visit www.ArizonaGuide.com to find information on all the exciting [events, festivals and activities](#) held throughout the Grand Canyon State!

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